THE TRAVANCORE AGRICULTURISTS' REGULATION AMENDMENT BILL.

Mr. Padiyara Joseph Kunju: സർ, ട്രാവൻകൂർ അഗ്രിക്കൽ ച്ചറിസ്റ്റ്സ് റിലീഫ് റഗുലേഷൻ അമൻറ്മെൻറിൽ ഇവിടെ അവതരിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിന അനുമതി ആവശ്യപ്പെട്ടുകൊള്ളുന്നു.

Mr. V. S. Arumukhom Pillai: I second it.

Mr. G. Narayana Aiyar: I oppose it. But before proceeding further, I should like to know what the usual procedure is.

President: When once the movef knows that his motion is opposed, the mover may proceed with his arguments for the necessity of the motion and then the opposer may speak.

Mr. Padiyara Joseph Kunju: സർ, തിരുവിതാംകൂറിലെ കർഷകർ ഇന്ന് ബഹുവിധമായ കഷ്ടതകൾ അനുഭവിക്കുന്നുണ്ടെന്നുള്ളതു സുവ്വിദിതമാണ്. ഉല്പന്നങ്ങളുടെ വിലക്കുറവുമൂലം ഫ ഠ ങ മുതൽ കർഷകർ കഷ്ടപ്പെട്ടുവരികയാണ്. ഉല്പന്നങ്ങൾക്ക് വിലക്കൂടുതൽ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്ന കാലത്ത് കൂടുതൽ പലിശ കൊടുത്തുകൊള്ളാമെന്നുള്ള കരാറിൽ കടം വാങ്ങിക്കുകയും ഉല്പന്നങ്ങളുടെ വിലക്കുറവു നിമിത്തം അവരുടെ കടങ്ങൾ തീർക്കാൻ നിവൃത്തിയില്ലാതെ ഇപ്പോൾ വിഷമിക്കുകയുമാണ് ചെയ്യുന്നത്. ഷൈലോക്ക് മനസ്ഥിതിക്കാരായ പണമിടപാടുകാരും പൊലിക്കടക്കാരും പാവപ്പെട്ട കൃഷിക്കാരായ അധമർണ്ണരെ ഉപദ്രവിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുകയാണ്. എൻറെ സ്നേഹിതൻ മി: അനന്തശിവയ്യർ പറഞ്ഞതുപോലെ ഇവർ കൃഷിക്കാരുടെ രക്തം ഊറ്റിക്കുടിക്കുകയാണ് ചെയ്യുവരുന്നത്. ഈ ബില്ലിൽ അടങ്ങിയിരിക്കുന്ന സംഗതികൾ എന്തുതന്നെയായാലും അവതരിപ്പിച്ചതിനുശേഷം രാജ്യത്തിൻറെ പൊതുതാല്പര്യത്തിനു യോജിച്ചവിധത്തിൽ വേണ്ട ഭേദഗതികൾ വരുത്തിക്കൊള്ളാമെന്നു വിചാരിച്ച് സമാധാനപ്പെടാതെ ഈ ബിൽ ഇവിടെ അവതരിപ്പിക്കുന്ന വിഷയത്തിൽപോലും മി. ജി. നാരായണയ്യർ എതിർത്തതിൽ ഞാൻ അത്ഭുതപ്പെടുന്നു. ഈ ബിൽ സംബന്ധമായി അദ്ദേഹത്തിനു എന്തെല്ലാം പറയാനുണ്ട്, എന്തെല്ലാം കാരണങ്ങളാലാണ് അദ്ദേഹം ഈ ബില്ലിനെ എതിർത്തത്. എന്നുള്ള സംഗതികൾ അറിഞ്ഞാൽ ഞാൻ അതിലേക്ക് സമാധാനം പറയാം. ഞാൻ മുമ്പ് പറഞ്ഞതുപോലെ കർഷകർക്ക് ഇന്ന് യാതൊരു വിഷമവുമില്ലെന്നാണ് അദ്ദേഹം പറയുന്നതെങ്കിൽ വിഷമം ഉണ്ടെന്നുള്ള സംഗതി ഞാൻ തെളിയിച്ചുകൊള്ളാം. അതുകൊണ്ട് മി. നാരായണയ്യർക്ക് പറയാനുള്ളതു് എന്തെല്ലാമാണെന്നു അറിഞ്ഞതിനുശേഷം ഞാൻ അതിലേക്കു മറുപടി പറഞ്ഞുകൊള്ളാം.

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Mr. G. Narayana Aiyar: I oppose the motion for leave to introduce the Travancore Agriculturists' Relief Regulation Amendment Bill. The original Bill was passed only two years ago. Sufficient time has not elapsed to ascertain the benefits, if any or defects in the working of the Bill. It is only after realising the defects in its working and the grievances of the agriculturists we can gauge what more could be done to better the conditions of the agriculturists. The Conciliation Boards were established only during last year and are regularly working now. There also the advantages derived from their constitution could not be ascertained now. Before the Agriculturists' debt Relief Regulation was passed the decree holders were realising their amounts from the judgment debtors in instalments in some cases on mutual agreement. Since the enactment of this Regulation and the establishment of Conciliation Boards it is regrettable to find that the amount realised by way of execution has gone down. In other words the amount realised in 1112 by means of execution was far greater than the amount realised in 1113. There was a deficiency to the extent of 4 lakhs by way of realisation in 1113. The provisions of the regulation instead of helping realisation of debts by giving concession to the debtors has retarded the progress of realisation. The provisions of this regulation were used by the debtors simply to defeat and delay payment of debts and tease creditors. The judgment debtors when they apply for conciliation had no idea of paying even the conciliated amount. I know of several instances in which the Conciliation Officer with the consent of the decree holder ordered to pay a smaller sum in full discharge of the debt within a period of time. Such orders were neither carried out nor obeyed. The creditors who are prepared to receive the conciliated amount were not able to get the amounts conciliated. The material considerations that weighed with the House in passing the Agriculturists' Relief Regulation were that the cost of living had gone down and the price of articles also had gone down. Naturally enough it was contented that the creditor must be prepared to receive a reduced amount due to him. It is true to say that to a certain extent the cost of living has gone down but not in all respects for instance the price of salt and kerosene oil has been the same. Has the price though there is over-production in our state of salt gone down ? Has the price of kerosene oil gone down. These are the necessities of even the poorest men. The Government are not prepared either to reduce the price of salt or court fees or school fees and they have their own justification for it They are not prepared to scale down debts due to them. Even on such elementary commodities the price is the same as before and there was no reduction in the price Although the cost of living has gone down

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[Mr. G. Narayana Aiyar.]

the style of living has gone up. Some 20 years before, an ordinary cooly was satisfied with wearing a mundoo and thuvarthu for covering his nackedness. Now he is having besides the mundoo and thortu an underwear, an upperwear, shirt, sweater etc. All the members of the House are aware of this. Even though he is a cooly he wants this luxury. With the advance of literacy and civilization whatever be the financial position of one-self, everyman wants to see that his children are given higher education disproportionate to the means and wants to lead a luxurious life. Even in schools the fee for the sixth form was Re. 1 some thirty years ago. Now it is about Rs. 3-8 roughly. The debtor who claims the scaling down of his debts is not prepared to lower his style of living. The bridegroom price has not gone down. The expense in house in such items as coffee tea etc., have not decreased. Then price of gold has increased considerably and the use of gold could not be dispensed with in practical life. Thus we find that the style of living has considerably increased and has become costlier. There is no sufficient justification to say from all these circumstances that the agriculturists need further relief all on a sudden ignoring the rights of the creditor. There is also the Report of the Nutrition Committee which has said that the average life of an Indian is far from satisfactory and that he is not using nutritious things containing enough of vitamin. Since the passing of the regulation credit business is completely at a stand still. No body is prepared to lend any amount for fear of the existing regulation even if you take into consideration the position of creditors in Travancore it could be seen that most of the loans advanced are below Rs. 1,000. The creditors are even now put to much difficulties in that they are not able to realise their small investments from their debtors. What does the amendment of the Agriculturists' Regulation propose ? It suggests the scaling down of even the principal. That is very hard in view of the poor position of most of the creditors.

Another aspect of the matter I wish to refer to is this. In the Madras Act there are certain very benevolent provisions which are absent in our regulation. Certain class of deserving creditors are protected by the Madras Act. Our regulation does not contain similar protection or provisions.

Mr. Kottoor Kunjukrishna Pillai (*Quilon cum Kunnatur*) : On a point of order. At this stage when the member asks for leave to introduce the Bill, can the clauses of the Bill be brought under discussion ? According to Standing Order No. 31

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the mover and opposer of the Bill have to make a brief statement. I am afraid that by referring to details in the provisions of the Bill the principle of the Standing Order is not adhered to.

President : According to the statement of the Lord Chancellor, brevity will vary according to exigencies of cases.

Mr. G. Narayana Aiyar : As regards even the Madras Agriculturists' Relief act it was passed only in 1938. Sufficient time has not elapsed to ascertain whether that act has in any way benefitted the people at large. Further the Madras Act has certain specialities. It exempts from the operation persons having a limited income.

President : At this stage I may say that the possibility of amending this bill, the changes and modifications by the Select Committee, all these could be considered later. At the present moment the fundamental principle of the Bill alone has to be considered.

Mr. G. Narayana Aiyar : If permission is granted for leave to introduce the bill, it means that the principle of the Bill is practically admitted. I seriously object to that. Let us see what the principle of the Bill is. It is simply one for the scaling down of debts. If that principle is admitted no objection could be made later on against this principle. In the light of the assurance that it will not be taken or assumed that the principle of the Bill is accepted and that I will not be barred or estopped from objecting to the principle later on I conclude my speech and oppose the motion.

President : The question before the House is whether the House grants leave to introduce the Travancore Agriculturists' Relief Regulation Amendment Bill.

The motion was put and carried,

Leave was granted.

RESOLUTION.

Mr. James Fletcher : Sir, I beg to move the following resolution ;

> "This Council recommends to the Government that a five-year plan be chalked out and necessary funds allotted for the purpose of improving all the irrigation tanks in Travancore."

Sir, agriculture is overwhelmingly the greatest industry of this country. The prosperity of this country depends on the prosperity of those who cultivate the land. (Mr. Balakrishnan Thampi ; *Hear hear*). Those who live by trading or by manufacture or by doing any kind of investment of money have to depend on the prosperity of the agriculturists. And how can the prosperity of the agriculturists be improved except by improving the facilities for agriculture ?

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